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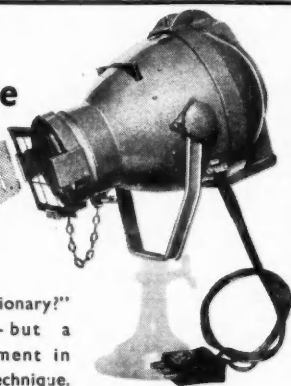
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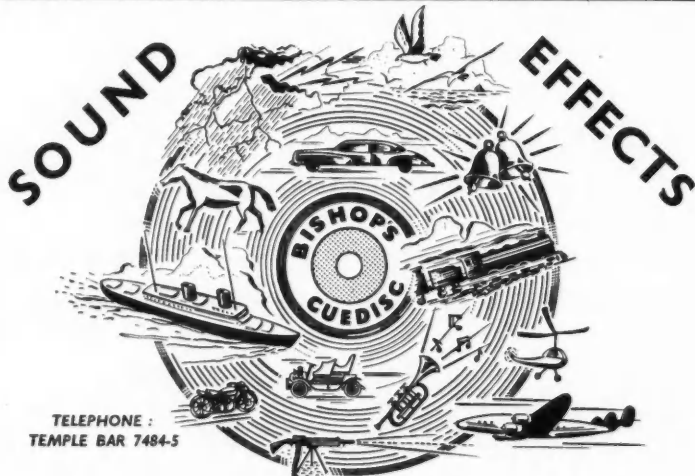
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FOR A SCENE FROM A PLAY BY SHAKESPEARE*

EDITORIAL

THE public got a salutary shock when it was announced that the St. James's Theatre, London, was to be demolished and a block of offices built in its place. Those who cherish memories of Sir George Alexander and Mrs. Patrick Campbell, of Lily Langtry, Henry Ainley and H. B. Irving, or more lately of Gladys Cooper, the Oliviers in 1951, or of Eric Portman and Margaret Leighton in the current success, have risen to make their protests. For this is a playhouse with a personality, a magic born of the encounter of thousands of audiences with hundreds of distinguished players. It stands in the very heart of London, and indeed it has been suggested that it might be preserved as a memorial to Queen Mary, who loved the theatre and lived round the corner from the St. James's.

When the British Drama League registered its protest, it pointed out that the destruction of a London playhouse affected the provinces too, since the larger provincial theatres depend upon an adequate supply of London productions to fill their programmes, while the "Reps" and the amateurs usually get their best support for the play which has been a London success. So the whole theatre would suffer from such a loss, and the most urgent and active steps must be taken to prevent it.

Those steps must be realistic. We cannot schedule a building as an ancient monument or preserve it as essential to our cultural life unless we recompense its owners for any loss incurred. The theatre in this country has become highly commercialised and we cannot suddenly deprive those who have taken the risks of running it as a business of their right to a reasonable return. If we British do at last recognise the theatre as necessary to a civilised people, then we must be prepared to pay some part of the cost.

Actually, instead of contributing to the support of the living theatre we tax it, and it is here that we can make an immediate beginning by abolishing Entertainments Tax on the living theatre. This would remove an injustice long suffered and sweep away some shameful anomalies. The need is now urgent. In the past year more than thirty theatres have been put up for sale, and to their number one of the most famous of provincial houses, the Theatre Royal, Birmingham, has just been added. A theatre has stood on that site since 1774: now an office block is to replace it.

These buildings, however beloved, are important not as buildings but because of what happens in them. The theatre is the fount from which all the mechanised forms of entertainment draw, because only in the theatre does the actor meet his audience night after night. Take away the opportunity for that experience and you will soon have for film, radio or television only performers as mechanical as their media. The theatre alone can maintain the art of acting.

The immediate abolition of the Tax is only a first step. Even when that is done we are only at the starting point—or the few yards past it represented by the £66,000 which the Arts Council was able to give last year to the theatre throughout England, compared to £350,000 given to two theatres in France. The ultimate national task is to support the theatre as a part of cultural life. But for a start—abolish the Tax!

GORDON CRAIG'S SOCRATIC DIALOGUES

By T. S. ELIOT

*The year 1955 marks the Fiftieth Anniversary
of the publication of Gordon Craig's First Dialogue
"The Art of the Theatre."*

OF Gordon Craig's two dialogues which are included in *On the Art of the Theatre*, the first appeared in 1905; the second is dated 1910. I am confident that I read the first dialogue while I was an undergraduate at Harvard—probably in 1907 or 1908. Other discoveries of the same period were Manet and Monet, Japanese prints, the plays of Maeterlinck, the music of Debussy and above all the combination of Maeterlinck and Debussy in *Pelleas et Mélisande*. I mention these facts, in themselves of trivial autobiographical interest, to place my first acquaintance with the work of Gordon Craig, and to indicate the sort of background of associated memories against which, a short time ago, I re-read these two dialogues.

To assess the achievement of Gordon Craig could be the task only of those who have followed the course of the drama and the stage in Europe and America during the past fifty years. It may well be that the influence of Gordon Craig on modern production in this country is much greater than I am aware of. His views appear to have been taken most seriously on the Continent, particularly in Germany. It may be that his influence upon production in England is unrecognised by persons like myself, simply because of its having been indirect: it may be that our theatre has been influenced by Continental practice which has itself been influenced directly by Craig's art and Craig's writing. Furthermore, I

have little recollection of what the theatre was like fifty years ago, either here or in America. But if I am not equipped to do justice to Craig, I can at least try to avoid doing him injustice; and make clear that I can only consider these two dialogues in relation to the theatrical situation as I know it to-day.

The art of the theatre is a mixed or composite art; from one point of view more composite in the production of drama than in the production of opera. For in opera, after all, the music, the concurrence of instrument and voice, is the main thing. The situation, the plot, must be expressed in music: the words have only to accord with orchestra and singing notes; and the mechanics of Fafner are less important than the mechanics of the crocodile in *Peter Pan*. We can all get pleasure from reading a play of Shakespeare or Ibsen—a pleasure different from that of seeing and hearing the play, and equally valuable as experience; but few of us have the training that would enable us to derive as much pleasure from reading the score of an opera as from hearing it on the stage. It is the voice of a great singer, rather than his skill as an actor, that we most clearly remember. But in a great production of a great play what is it that we are enjoying? Is it the words which we know very well already, and could enjoy at home; is it the actor's elocution of the words, or is it the other arts of movement, gesture and expression? How much is owing



GORDON CRAIG'S DESIGN FOR A SCENE FROM "ELECTRA".

to the actor and how much to his director and producer? And what difference has the setting and lighting made to our enjoyment?

It seems to me that Gordon Craig, in his first dialogue, follows a course

that we all tend to follow. That is to say, all of us taking part in a production pay a handsome tribute to the contributions of our colleagues, and then we all tend to relapse into thinking our own contribution the most important. We

can't help it; and I dare say we do our work all the better in this belief. Craig starts by saying:—

"The Art of the Theatre is neither acting nor the play, it is not scene nor (*sic*) dance, but it consists of all the elements of which these things are composed: action, which is the very spirit of acting; words, which are the body of the play; line and colour, which are the very heart of the scene; rhythm, which is the very essence of dance."

We can all agree. Perfect concord reigns. But very soon we begin to magnify our own claims, and to regard the claims of other participants as exaggerated. Craig's first step, in wading through seas of theatrical blood to grasp his own crown, is to dismiss the poet:—

"A dramatic poem is to be read. A drama is not to be read, but to be seen upon the stage."

One wonders at this point where the work of Shakespeare belongs. It would seem that there are two Shakespeares: the poet, whose works are in libraries, and the dramatist, whose works only exist during a performance. Some of the illustrations in *The Art of the Theatre* are designs for Shakespeare plays; and a little later in this same dialogue Craig is telling us how *Romeo and Juliet* should be played. Only, by this time, the poet having been put in his place, it is the actor whom he has to subdue. The relevant passages are too long to quote, but if you will read the dialogues for yourself, I think you will find that what Craig says about the subordination of actor to producer can be taken in two ways: either as asserting only the authority without which the producer could not produce at all—as an affirmation of the obvious law that the man who is responsible for the *total effect* must be able to over-rule the actor who is responsible only for his own part; or on the other hand it can be read as establishing a kind of dictatorship. I wonder whether the relation of a producer to his cast will not vary according to the personality of each member of the cast. But that (I am happy to say) is none of my

business. I only remark that what Craig says could either be taken as claiming only the minimum control for the producer, or as claiming something more than the maximum.

Similarly, with Gordon Craig's ideas for stage sets. It seems to me quite likely that the influence of Gordon Craig was exercised beneficially in the way of eliminating a great deal of rubbish and superfluous gear from the English stage. But when I inspect his designs, they look as if they would overpower both play and cast by a cyclopean simplicity so extreme as to be fiercely aggressive. And it does seem to me possible that simplification, in its utmost perfection of balance of lights, planes and masses, can commit exactly the same mistakes as the elaboration against which it reacts—i.e. by calling attention to itself. Instead of a stage set, it might give us a picture. For a stage set is, to my mind, something on which the attention of the audience should be focused only when it is empty, or before the action starts. It should, certainly, be designed with a view to reinforcing the mood, the meaning of the play, though the ways in which it is to do so, the symbolism, abstraction or realism, elaboration or simplification, the style, the personality of the designer, may be as various as the varieties of drama itself. But ordinarily, the set should only be the conscious centre of attention for the audience for a few seconds after the curtain is raised. After that, its impression should be unconsciously received. It is difficult to tell, merely from looking at Craig's sketches, and without seeing them as the background for a play directed according to his principles, whether his sets would support the play or distract attention from it.

It has seemed to me at moments, while reading the two dialogues, as if Craig's ideal for the drama was that of a kind of wordless ballet. ("The father of the dramatist was the dancer.") In any case, his emphasis upon action is perhaps outdated by the development

"At the first note of music the curtain, which is a thing of shreds and patches, is rent in the middle, and a man with a hideous mask is seen standing on a little hillock of mud. He is breathing so heavily, one might almost say he snorts: the kind of noise a bull makes when his mate has been removed to the shambles. From his right arm hangs a little, dead boy, which he stretches out to the audience. He shows this figure to all, moving it from right to left and from left to right, and all the time the sound of restrained bellowing is heard. His movements are slow and deliberate—we think that all emotion and all life has gone from him as well as from the dead figure which he holds. From every side, and beneath him, come the many echoes of his solitary cry, and these echoes take new shapes, resolving into the words 'Pain . . . Pain . . . and Sorrow . . .' which float singing in the air, or roll like billows around his feet. Then a black rain commences to fall, very softly at first, then like a hail storm, and finally becomes so swift and dense that the two figures are lost to sight and everything ceases—sound—vision and all."



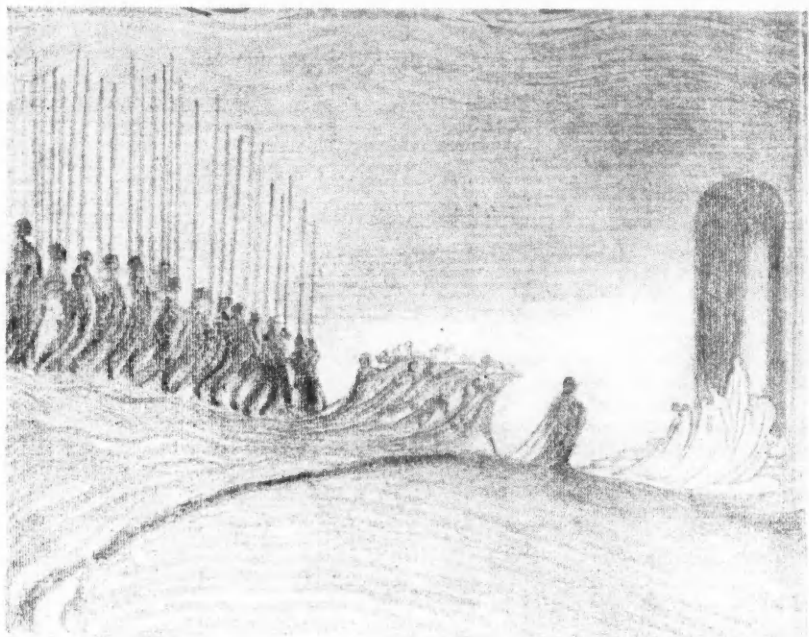
Design for the First Movement in the Prologue of the Masque of "Hunger," designed and written by Gordon Craig.

of the cinema—development both in the mechanism and in the technique of production—during the last fifty years. I cannot but think that the development of the screen-play will prove to have influenced, imperceptibly perhaps but profoundly, the stage of our day and of to-morrow. Just as photography has influenced the art of portrait painting, in that the aim of the modern portrait painter is directed to what the photographer cannot do, so the people of the theatre—from author to actor—are likely to concentrate on what the screen cannot do.* Now the animated picture—successor of the zoetrope which

captivated my fancy as a child—is essentially visual action. On the stage, you can present action as an interruption of stillness: on the screen, you can present stillness only as an interruption of action. On the screen the words, however important and however beautiful (as in a screen-play by William Shakespeare) can only complete the message conveyed by the picture: on the stage, accordingly, it should be permissible and acceptable that the picture—the total scene, the movement, posture and gesture of each member of the cast—should be calculated with a view to completing the

* I am fearful of pronouncing judgment where I am incompetent. So I wish that one of those actors of our time who have achieved eminence both on stage and on screen—one

who was also highly conscious and articulate—would write us an essay on the difference between the two media from the actor's point of view.



A STUDY FOR STAGE MOVEMENT BY GORDON CRAIG

message conveyed by the words.* Hence it would seem to suggest itself, that every statement about the theatre (from Aristotle to Gordon Craig and in the future) is limited by conditions of the critic's time and place. He cannot foresee changes to come in the world, or the relevance of such changes to the theatre. Aristotle was not legislating for Shakespeare or Racine; and I do not think that we can regard Gordon Craig as legislating for the theatre of the Picture Palace age.

There remain two very strong commendations which I must pay to Gordon Craig. The first is that there are incidental remarks in the dialogues which seem to me as true to-day as

* And when I say *words* I mean the words in action—that is, the words as written by that author and as spoken by those interpreters.

ever. For instance, Gordon Craig advises the producer to ignore the author's stage directions: I have always felt that stage directions were an interference by the author in the domain of the producer, and that every stage direction I found myself obliged to insert, was an admission of some flaw in the play.† Speaking as an author, I heartily applaud Craig's advice to the producer to ignore the author's stage directions.

† That is an exaggeration. But at this point, I was just about to express regret that the late Bernard Shaw had not observed Craig's prescription. And then I thought No! It is true that Shaw's stage directions limit and date the plays, but the plays will date anyway—John Tanner will not survive the Fabian Society of which he was a foundation member. Possibly it is the prefaces and the stage directions that will preserve Shaw's plays, like flies in amber. But this is an exception of the kind that proves the rule.

My second commendation can be prefaced by a sentence of Heraclitus:

Πόλεμος πάντων μὲν πατήρ ἐστι

which, as Sir Winston Churchill is wont to say, may be translated for the benefit of our Wykehamist friends as *War is the father of all things*. I am grateful to Gordon Craig for the things he says that infuriate me; they give me something to kick against. Who is the most important person in the theatre is a question that will never be finally settled: the fight must go on. Sometimes the author, sometimes the producer, sometimes the actor-manager, some-

times the star will be top-dog; it depends too on the type of play, on the conditions of the time, on what the critics will approve and what the public will pay for. And I hope there will always be iconoclasts and malcontents and stirrers-up of strife (as well as experimenters in every direction) and someone like Gordon Craig (who, if he is like Gordon Craig, will probably disagree with Craig and with everyone else) in every generation or two. Not least, to keep us in touch with the Continent and prevent the English stage lapsing, as it will always tend to do, into insularity.

TROUBLES OF THE TIME

By IVOR BROWN

THE news editors of the popular Press assume that a trivial occurrence on the television screen, a mere mishap or a bit of bickering, is a major national event and should be featured on the front page. When I remarked to a friend that this was overdoing it, he replied, "Well, last night's TV is what we all talk about in the morning train from the suburbs." News editors know what they are doing and if they deem that the state of Mr. Grumbling's temper or the ability of Lady Whatsit to guess the occupation of an average adjuster's apprentice or a putter-on of metal tags on shoe-laces is a matter of universal concern, they will not be far wrong in their estimate. Are we therefore to decide that, owing to television, the British people are becoming increasingly imbecile and that their notions of entertainment and their general sense of values are increasingly deplorable?

I think not. It is difficult to read seriously in a crowded train and the morning journey is not the likeliest

occasion for profound meditation. This TV chatter is only competing with cross-words for the occupation of a tiresome half-hour. But the TV chatter is certainly not going to decrease when we have competitive services in the autumn of this year and when the train-talkers can debate whether the commercial programmes of their various regions do or do not put Lime Grove's offering in the shade. I do not myself fear that commercial TV is going to be altogether trivial in its choice of matter. Obviously the peak viewing hours between 7.30 and 9.30 will be mainly occupied by the popular stars of light entertainment, since most advertisers will naturally insist on that. But there may be, and I think probably will be, other features of special appeal put on after the peak hours and I know that some big firms of high standing in their various lines of industry and commerce would be ready to sponsor something of quality without a lot of "boost" and with only the simple information that this programme appears by

favour of So-and-So. We may get some beneficial surprises.

It is unlikely that the new programmes will greatly add to the number of those who get all their entertainment thus passively and on the cheap. There will certainly be some splitting of the existing viewers into two camps, one of B.B.C. loyalists and one of commercial programme addicts. But it has already been shown that the ever-widening sale of TV sets does not of necessity deprive other entertainments and activities of public support.

We have been told that television would severely cut down reading: yet the public librarians report a bigger turn-over of books on loan and the publishers, a tribe always ready to utter a moan, surprisingly announce a rise (or at least no diminution) in the number of new "titles" issued annually. At the same time the cinemas have reported larger attendances during the past year; it has probably been the case that, when the instalments due on TV sets were finally paid off, the purchasers realised that there was no longer an obligation to keep their faces continually glued to the fireside screens in order to make the best of their investment. They decided to go out and about again. Of course the arrival of alternative services will for a while be "the news," a popular talking-point. But I do not believe that the theatre is greatly menaced thereby. After all, theatre-going is only an occasional matter and very few, after a first rush of viewing, want to do nothing else for seven nights in the week. I myself use television fairly often: but I know when my eyes need a rest and my habits a change.

The London theatres have not suffered in quantity of support: immensely long runs have been enjoyed, naturally by plays acclaimed at the start and also by others which were pooh-poohed or even damned by the critics. This is true not only of the Big Musicals, the Ice Shows and the entertainments made popular by the leading

"comics" of the day, the Crazy Gang, Norman Wisdom, Jimmy Edwards, and the others with a huge public. It is true of light comedies and farces, some of which have been of a quite feeble and over-familiar kind. Yet see how they run!

To my mind, the challenge to intelligent theatre lies here and not in the mechanical rivals. The London theatres get clogged up with the Show Business productions and also with long-running rough-and-tumble comedies. Neither type could one recommend to a visitor in London, either from our own country or from abroad, who wants to see the best that the capital can offer. That visitor is a constant embarrassment to me, because there are so few things that I can recommend if his taste is at all exacting. The reason for the long runs is insufficiently understood. It lies in the vicious influence of the ever-mounting costs of production. When there is inflation of the costs, there must be inflation of the support.

The piece which could have been launched with a capital of two thousand pounds a few years ago now needs four or five thousand: the same upward leap in the risk is also true of more ambitious and expensive ventures. The possible receipts, which must cover inflated running costs and also pay back the large original investment, are limited by the size of the house. Only so much a week can be taken: therefore, unless there are to be severe losses, the piece chosen must be of a kind to attract a very large number of pleasure-seekers and so be able to run for a much longer time than was necessary in the past. Only thus can the original outlay be recouped. (When I was a boy Beerbohm Tree could mount most lavish Shakespearean productions and withdraw them profitably after a run of three or four months. It would take a manager at least a year to recover the production expenses of similar ventures to-day.)

Accordingly the commercial manager is driven to do two things: one is to

provide an article appealing to the "night-up-West" playgoers on a really wide front: the second is to increase the London audiences by bringing great numbers along in profitable loads from outside. Hence the arrangement of the motor-coach parties on which many London theatres are now so largely depending. I visited not long ago a "who-dunnit" piece which had drawn huge audiences for a year. My companions in the house had largely come up in bus-parties from the new industrial areas round London: and often these parties come from much greater distances than the suburbs and Home Counties.

These playgoers, who are the people needed to provide the very long run, are seeking a laugh or a thrill of a simple kind. It is good to have new playgoers and the arrangement may have advantages, especially for the author of the long-running play and the actors engaged in it. But, with these simple tastes dominating, the long run must tend to depress the general quality of theatrical work. The play that is different, unless it is carried by one of the "stars" with reliable drawing-power at the box office, of whom there are very few, is either not launched at all for reasons of finance or never gets a look in because the available premises are otherwise engaged. It may be put this way. With Alec Guinness you could risk any play of a distinctive and ambitious kind; without him, or one or two others, you will have to be rich and gallant to take such a risk at all.

What then of the local "reps" and of the amateurs? The former are very hard put to it, but there is a growing tendency of local authorities to lend a hand—this is just happening at Oxford—and the Arts Council is usually ready to help when it can get the town concerned to do something also. Furthermore both the film industry and commercial television have an interest in keeping the "reps" alive because they are the school of the players and authors whom they need to keep their

own workshops properly staffed and served. The Rank organisation has sustained one or two "reps," but I believe it is drawing out. If so, it is a pity, and bad policy too. In the interests of all the entertainment industry there ought to be enough support, public or private, to prevent the small local theatres from collapsing under the burden of costs.

The amateur actor acts according to his name of amateur: he loves it and further television services will scarcely affect his eagerness to continue his activities. They may a little diminish his audience, but as I said, I do not fear a great diminution. The danger-point is when a theatrical production happens to coincide with the television appearance of a very popular star: a big Gracie Fields programme or the reappearance of Norman Wisdom on the home screens might keep the public at home on that occasion to a fatal extent. Productions made to run only for two or three nights or a week cannot afford one really bad night. We can only hope that this kind of competition does not occur too often.

The economic compulsion put on the commercial theatre to seek long runs should stimulate all who care for what Norman Marshall has called "The Other Theatre" to make still greater efforts to keep their local undertakings alive, whether they be amateur or professional. One thing the little theatres can demonstrate, namely that a shoe-string production, with taste and ingenuity making up for lack of capital, is worth while if the play be of value and the performance efficient. If the audience is ready to be attracted by the good word well spoken and the fresh idea well conveyed, even though the scenery be a simple suggestion and not an essay in realism which is bound to cost money, then there is hope. Ever since the films came in, the theatre has been subject to recurrent post-mortems. But it is not a corpse yet, and TV, even in double doses, will not make it so.

THE DIAGHILEV EXHIBITION

By JANET LEEPER

TO those of us who lived through the intoxicating excitement of the Diaghilev era, it seemed almost impossible that the glamour and glory of that golden age could be recaptured, however fleetingly, by an exhibition. Yet this is just what the Diaghilev Exhibition succeeded in doing. It has

brilliant *coup de théâtre*, quite in the Diaghilev tradition. It was also a party, a First Night party, which went on and on, week after week, reaching fever-pitch in the evenings when celebrities from that vanished age descended to discourse. On these occasions the vast staircase and entrance hall given up to



SERGE DIAGHILEV DIRECTING A REHEARSAL.

thus set a standard for all future theatrical exhibitions which will be hard to live up to.

Assembled by Richard Buckle for the 1954 Edinburgh Festival and then most skilfully re-staged in the stately mansion of Forbes House in London, it was at once the summing up of a whole epoch rich in artistic activity, and a

the cult of the *Sleeping Beauty*—a *tableau dormant* in effigy—was packed with people content to stand and wait, as at some stage door, for a glimpse of one or other of those who had actually taken part in the great Diaghilev enterprise.

From the first moment when we entered a mysterious door guarded by

gigantic Nubian slaves and found ourselves wafted up into a darkened Paris street, where the faded and stylised posters of Serov and Cocteau (1909) announced that the *Ballets Russes* had arrived in Western Europe, we felt as though we were under enchantment. The spell continued as the main Exhibition unfolded itself: gaily decorated staircases, brilliant colours, room after room of vibrant drawings full of movement, tossed off by the artist in the throes of creation, scenes, costumes, properties, everything needed for theatrical illusion and yet with a vigorous artistic life of its own, while the music of opera and ballet streaming forth from concealed panels in the various galleries brought vividly to mind those very nights we had spent in the theatre.

In the great white and gold ballroom hung with glittering chandeliers were mustered the portraits of Diaghilev and his circle, of his dancers and designers and composers, of his patrons and supporters. Here too was the head of Nijinsky as the Faun by Una Troubridge, discovered by Madame Sokolova near the Charing Cross Road last October, labelled "Straight from the Temple of Mithras." As I was looking at the synopsis of *L'Après-midi d'un Faune* in one of the showcases nearby, the evocative strains of that very tone-poem of Debussy came stealing across the room. As in a dream, I saw the whole ballet re-enacted, a Grecian urn come to life; the Faun half-human, half-animal, his encounter with one of a procession of nymphs, the startled fear of the nymph, the fallen scarf, the Faun retreating into his backwoods with her scarf and his dreams, as I had seen it many times long ago.

There is no question about it, Nijinsky was as great an actor as he was a dancer. In each new role he was transformed. Those who speak only of his prowess as a dancer forget this essential truth. When he rose up, seated on a lotus, out of a pool in *Le Dieu Bleu*, he was an oriental Deity full of stillness and mystery, come to



"LE PAVILLON D'ARMIDE." Design by Benois for the favourite slave—a part first created by Nijinsky.

visit the earth. As the gold negro in *Shéhérazade*, he was the most sensuous of lovers, as *Le Spectre de la Rose*, the most poetic and tender of spirits, while in *Le Pavillon d'Armide* he was the very embodiment of French rococo with its style and charm. His immense talents were always at the service of his art, and the same may be said of Chaliapine, who was also brought to the west

by Diaghilev. Had Chaliapine not been gifted with the greatest voice of his time, he would still have been its most famous actor. His pencil sketch of Diaghilev shows that he was gifted all round, and it is this universality of talent, which we associate more with the Renaissance than with our own times, which was the distinguishing

capable of producing the sort of music, the kind of décor that he needed. So it was that the very young Stravinsky was commissioned to compose the music for a fairy-tale ballet and produced the scintillating score of *L'Oiseau de Feu*, while the setting and costumes of *Shéhérazade*, given over to Bakst to design, were so bold and exciting that



"LE ROSSIGNOL," by Stravinsky. Décor by Alexandre Benois (1914).

feature of the group of friends of which Diaghilev was the centre.

What was the secret of Diaghilev? He said himself that he had "no great gift." Without being a great musician or artist, he had that even rarer gift of being a cause of greatness in others. Such men are few, but they provoke masterpieces. His flair was so unerring that he was able to discern in advance who, under his influence, would become

their influence on colour-schemes, materials, indoor furnishing and feminine attire generally was felt throughout Europe. Indeed the Diaghilev influence on the arts was so all pervading that in 1926, at the Exhibition of Decorative Art in Paris, people felt that it was "like a Diaghilev Exhibition."

It was some time before Diaghilev found his chosen path. At the Exhibition

were to be seen the twelve volumes of *Mir Iskusstva*, "The World of Art" which he edited for Mamontov from 1899 to 1904, the aim of which was to reveal Russian art to the world. In

they were at the end of an aesthetic period and that something entirely new would take its place. In 1906 he took Russian art to Paris, in 1907 he took Russian music thither, in 1908 he took



"SHEHERAZADE." Costume Design by Leon Bakst (1910).

1905 he organised an exhibition of Historic Portraits at the Taurida Palace and wrote for it a masterly catalogue. Already, prophetically, he was announcing to his circle his conviction that

Russian opera and in 1909 he held his first season of Russian Ballet abroad. His success was immediate and phenomenal. All his composers, designers, choreographers and dancers were at

first Russian. But in 1912 we find him commissioning Ravel to compose the ballet *Daphnis & Chloë* and in 1914 the Spaniard José-Maria Sert designed *La Légende de Joseph* to music by Strauss, an international co-operation which was not in the latter case wholly successful.

This earliest, purely Russian phase of the Diaghilev enterprise was in many ways the most exciting. Nothing could equal the thrill to a western audience of the wild Polovtsian dances from *Prince Igor*, the Borodin music, the Roerich settings and costumes, Adolf Bolm as the Warrior Chief, or of Chaliapine as *Boris Godunov*, or the Russian chorus in *Khovantchina*, singing as only Russians can sing. To this period also belong those other early Fokine ballets, beginning with the beautiful *Pavillon d'Armide* (which has never been revived), *Les Sylphides*, *Carnaval*, *Shéhérazade*, *L'Oiseau de Feu*, *Le Spectre de la Rose*, the delightful under-water ballet *Sadko*, *Petrushka* and *Thamar*. All these I saw when they were new and remember as if they were yesterday! The striking décor for *Thamar* has remained a vivid memory and it was remarkable to find it as startling and impressively ominous at the Exhibition as I remembered it in the theatre. In this ballet Madame Karsavina displayed her histrionic gifts to the full: as a predatory Caucasian princess, luring travellers to their doom, there was little dancing to be done.

These ballets passed in endless procession through my mind on looking at the designs on the walls of the Exhibition. Roerich, the master of the primitive, poorly represented compared to Benois whose designs for *Petrushka* and *Le Rossignol* made a very fine show. What a designer, and what versatility! And how gay the *chinoiserie* looked against the brilliant yellow wallpaper. Then to the Bakst rooms, with a blue-green background especially designed for them, where young Rajahs and Bayadères and Chief Eunuchs and peacock-carrying attendants and all the

paraphernalia of the orient was displayed. Versatility is also the keynote to Bakst; his Greek designs are very fine and so was his *Sleeping Princess* of 1921, a precious memory of a host of dancers in wonderful costumes, from which "Arlequine" is a single charming example. Before reaching her there were the brilliant peasant folk-art designs of Gontcharova and Larionov for *Coq d'Or* and *Contes Russes*. The former was given originally as an opera-ballet with the singers robed in puce seated to right and left of the stage in tiers, while the dancers mimed the action in the middle. It was highly original and perfectly successful but the double cast was no doubt a great expense and the experiment was not repeated. *Contes Russes* was a delightful ballet which should be revived, in which the Cat played an important part. He was danced and mimed by Idzikowski (an interested visitor to the Exhibition on the first day) who was later to create the part of the Snob in *La Boutique Fantasque*.

The purely Russian background fades as the Revolution stands up like a dividing wall. And now it is the cosmopolitan world of Paris that Diaghilev draws on for his décor—Picasso, Derain, Matisse, Braque, Juan Gris, Bauchant, Marie Laurencin, Utrillo, Tchelitchev, de Chirico and Rouault, all of whom are represented in the Exhibition. And Massine, the slim youth of *La Légende de Joseph*, takes the place of Fokine as choreographer.

Of these later ballets it is *La Boutique Fantasque* to the gay music of Rossini and *Le Tricorne* by Manuel de Falla, with décor by Derain and Picasso respectively which the British public, starved for beauty through the long war years, took most enthusiastically to its heart. Madame Lopokova became a star overnight, and as dancer and choreographer Massine carried all before him. From now on, everything went on as before only differently, Diaghilev's astonishing gifts leading him now here now there, ever seeking

out and finding new talent. In 1925 the twenty-year-old Constant Lambert was chosen to provide a new score and the twenty-one-year-old Balanchine engaged as choreographer, while the

child of the Diaghilev tradition—past the great ballroom full of portraits and showcases, the haunted theatre with its pathetic relics, the caricature room, the little scenes of contemporary life, we



"THE SLEEPING PRINCESS." Costume Design for Arlequine by Leon Bakst.

designer chosen for the last powerful ballet *Le Fils Prodigue* (1929) was Rouault.

Descending by the charming pale staircase in the style of Bérard—true

feel we have lived through a remarkable period of theatrical history, when a galaxy of talents never seen before or since were assembled together for twenty years.

PLAYS IN PERFORMANCE

By J. W. LAMBERT

I HAVE often watched, with a horror not far removed from respect, the flow of gesture, the torrent of patter with which a pavement salesman transmutes the shoddiest goods into the stuff of gorgeous argosies. How I wish that at this moment I could, by assuming a jaunty cloth cap and an off-white silk muffler, assume also some of his persuasive skill, and paint the London theatre of the last months in the resplendent colours of the heart's desire! Not that I, thank heaven, am required to sell the productions put before us recently: but anyone who loves the theatre must wish to make out as good a case as possible.

Yet even as I nip up on my little soapbox and defiantly twitch my well-padded shoulders confidence ebbs away. What have I to offer? Well, cross me 'eart, lidies and ge'men, them two Shikespeare shows at the Vic wasn't 'arf bad, reely! Proper lark that *Tamin' of the Shrew*, yerss, you oughterer seen 'em, lovely bit o' scrappin', just like 'ome—nah, don' get me wrong, lidies, course I don' treat my ole traht like that Paul Rogers done. Cor, 'e was a one! See 'im come to 'is weddin' swingin' on the stige on the end of a rope, eh—watcher fink o' that fer a bri' idea, eh? Wonder oo fought that one up! Wo' a caper—'ad me rollin' in the aisles, that did. 'Ere, 'ave a look at this—*Love's Libour's Lorst*. Pre'y stuff, innit? Listen to that John Neville's lovely voice—well, go on, 'e's listenin' to it, you can too, no extra charge. Wot abaht these two, then; 'ave a dekko at 'em, funny ole geezers, all long words, dunno wot they're yappin' abaht arf the time, nor don't they, I reckon. Don' arf mike yer larf, though. Nah, come on folks, lovely grub, bes' quality in the market, you won't get no better . . .

You won't either: there's the rub.

For the truth is that *Love's Labour's Lost* and *The Taming of the Shrew* hardly ever rose, as productions, above a modest repertory level—although there were in each several performances worthy of a nobler frame. Luckily we have outgrown the convention which regarded *Love's Labour's Lost* as a mellifluous bore; a generation which can enjoy Christopher Fry can also enjoy the flow of spirit and fancy, the dancing grace and youthful self-conscious cleverness, the underlying melancholy which in the end so beautifully chimes with the ambiguously merry note of the staring owl.

Alas, Frith Banbury's production never quite threw off the shadow of two heavy disadvantages—at least for me: one, the memory of Hugh Hunt's 1949 version, the other Cecil Beaton's hideous décor, which chilled the verbal dance in a bleak green cardboard wilderness. The performance as a whole trundled along pleasantly enough until a sadly over-elaborated choral finale. A laboured Boyet could hardly efface the rococo tones of Walter Hudd's exquisite compound of farcical flounces and worldly wisdom; Michael Bates's round-eyed Costard, well enough acted, yet carried no trace of the heroic simplicity which George Benson brought to the part. But Laurence Hardy has never been better than as Holofernes; the new humanism, swallowed whole and quite undigested, rumbled back from him in a superbly resonant flow of orotund erudition. Paul Daneman's Sir Nathaniel, a fairly conventional sketch of senility, was yet in its whimpering way not at all disgraced by the hovering, clucking ghost of Miles Malleon, greatest of curates; and Paul Rogers's Don Adriano drew a golden thread of tumbled folly through Navarre, besides offering a delicious parody of Esmé Percy.



MARY URE, GEOFFREY DUNN and PAUL SCOFIELD in "Time Remembered" at the Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith. Photograph by Angus McBean.

Mr. Rogers's Petruchio, as we might have expected, was a fine vigorous fellow, but . . . In an earlier Old Vic production (what a pest is memory!) Trevor Howard drew the shrew-tamer with a seedy panache which caught well the note of desperation to be heard in Petruchio's exertions. In the earlier scenes at least Mr. Rogers played him—admittedly handicapped by a tiresomely slashed and silly costume—with a slightly disagreeable cocky rasp, as though he were a commercial traveller determined to get on in the world: an acceptable Renaissance conception, it is true, but somehow not quite right. Yet in the essentials both he and Ann Todd, a white and spiteful Kate the Curst, got to what heart there is in the play. The crucial point, the scene which can save the piece, if anything can, from being a mere coarse-textured anecdote, lies in this pair's very first moments together. If in their long

sniping rally actor and actress can establish the fact that, on sight, an emotional spark has been struck, then all that follows, even Kate's submission (and Petruchio's heartfelt "Marry, peace it bodes") has some meaning. This projection of a strong personal relationship, without benefit of actual on-stage embraces, is something which English players seem to find difficult; but Miss Todd and Mr. Rogers brought it off, so that although the trimmings of Denis Carey's production were sometimes fussy, and the rest of the acting never more than adequate, the evening was not without its reward.

The more I see of Anouilh's plays done, as they say, into English the sorrier I feel for M. Anouilh. Of the eight or so which have been produced in London at best two, to my mind—*Eurydice* (*Point of Departure*) and *L'Invitation au Château* (*Ring Round the Moon*)—have received fair treatment. Elsewhere

translation, production or performance have sadly traduced the originals; and in *Time Remembered* all three elements are at fault. This charming little piece, written defiantly in 1939, is, as usual in Anouilh, a contrasting of dream and reality, ideal and real, innocence and corruption. But here all bitterness is absent; even the worldly ones are seen as objects of astonishment and pity, not of loathing; and in the end real life is given the victory over a retreat into fantasy. Whimsical absurdity, regrets, kindness, longing, twilight and the morning star succeed each other as the piece dances on.

Or should dance on. But the translation plods. The settings, by Peter Rice, though gay and imaginative, are carried out with oppressive solidity. William Chappell's production is unexpectedly laboured, and inventive to the point of exasperation — if one character mentions Vesuvius or a newspaper, another must laboriously puff cigar smoke or ostentatiously unfold *Le Figaro*. Final disaster, the whole thing seems to have been conceived, or misconceived, as a "star vehicle" for Margaret Rutherford. This splendid performer plays an elderly duchess who dearly loves her nephew, a lovelorn fellow, clinging to the memory of an exotic creature who died after he had been permitted to adore her for three days. The duchess brings to the house a girl who looks like the dead woman, and sets in motion the plot by which, in the end, the young man comes to prefer a simple, living minnette to the embalmed recollection of a woman whom, to tell the truth, he has almost forgotten. When, every now and again, Miss Rutherford is allowed a moment of respite from the one-woman variety show she is called upon to provide she releases springs of tenderness and comic power which glow through the play. But for much of the time she is made to act herself silly with pouts, wobbles, skips, gobbles, waves, puffs and gasps in an effort to carry off what is quite outside the requirements of the part.

Paul Scofield, who is steadily acquiring depth without heaviness, wanders through the piece with a delightful, luring, sometimes self-mocking melancholy which is perfectly offset by Mary Ure's relaxed radiance. Nobody can yet know whether Miss Ure is likely to develop range and power; here she is altogether delightful, a shaft of morning candour lighting up her lover's anxiously preserved world of dusk and fading dreams. These two performances, after all, save the day; for although Miss Rutherford is misprized, and most of the supporting players distressingly bad, I would go far to see Miss Ure and Mr. Scofield, a sunbeam and a reluctant cobweb, humming Waldteufel in the dawn.

Too much production, too much fuss, too much business . . . again and again the cry goes up. It has gone up in the past, and with a vengeance, in the face of some of Tyrone Guthrie's feverish invention. But in *The Matchmaker* play and producer were perfectly matched, and Mr. Guthrie coaxed a splendid romp out of Thornton Wilder's ramshackle farce of New York life in the 1880s. True, he had a splendid cast to help him, with Ruth Gordon scheming and improvising with hennaed abandon, stuttering out fantasies like an overheated machine-gun, fixing reluctance and bashfulness with a beady, relentless eye; Eileen Herlie most musically and delightfully silly as a cautiously amorous milliner; Sam Levene adamant itself; Arthur Hill as diffident as an optimistic snail; Henzie Raeburn minatory, Peter Bayliss a rubious rogue, and Esmé Church monumentally absurd upon her sofa.

As for the rest, there's small choice in rotten apples, as Hortensio puts it. The Arts Theatre let us see a version of Gide's *The Immoralist* by Ruth and Augustus Goetz, who so admirably extracted *The Heiress* from Henry James's *Washington Square*. This time, however, they have produced a play which is not only a travesty of the book (in which the hero's homosexuality

was, of course, only one aspect of his calculated amorality) complete with happy ending, but a dull piece for the theatre, in which Yvonne Mitchell sighed and Michael Gough, type-cast, snarled to small purpose.

electrify the theatre; for that matter even Felix Aylmer and Harold Scott disappeared into the dun level of mild amusement; only Judith Furse as a big, bold neighbour brought life into the piece, like a shark in a swimming pool.



PETER SALLIS, SAM LEVENE and LEE MONTAGUE in "The Matchmaker" at the Haymarket Theatre. Photograph by Angus McBean.

A new comedy-thriller by Agatha Christie, *Spider's Web*, is by way of being a collector's piece of clichés, dramatic and verbal. Margaret Lockwood kept up well with her stereotyped situations, but could hardly be said to

Alan Melville's comedy, *Simon and Laura*, about the private bickering of an actor and his actress wife, and their public bliss, provided an opportunity, of watching Coral Browne, svelte and queenly, Roland Culver,

blandly cross, and Ernest Thesiger, unctuously prim, go through familiar paces, while Dora Bryan and Ian Carmichael brought a disconcerting note of vitality from the world of revue.

Almost every critic in London has been rude about *Book of the Month*: I can only say that I thought it very funny. The notion of the daughter of a rather stuffy household in Cheltenham writing a best-seller imputing fearful behaviour to her family and friends is obviously a good one. Basil Thomas has elaborated it in a rough-and-ready way, retaining an element of charades; the result has vitality and some highly effective moments, dealt with handsomely by Hugh Williams, Margaretta Scott and Judy Campbell.

Almost every critic in London has been indulgent towards *The Little Glass*

Clock. I can only say that I thought it clumsy, shoddy, sniggeringly salacious, without the redemption of either wit or gusto. That two intelligent people like Kay Hammond and John Clements should have put on this costume balderdash, and what is more appeared in it, is in itself a comment on the state of the London theatre. Miss Hammond worked all her mannerisms to the bone, drawing and huskily cooing, and hanging out her hands as though to dry; Mr. Clements stumped about peevishly, pausing from time to time to make a studied gesture; it was left to George Relph, an abbé disguised as a general, to provide, with the unplumbed implications of his chuckle, the awed delight of his perpetual astonishment, a flicker of light amid the encircling gloom.

CHARACTER ACTING

By ST. JOHN ERVINE

DR. J. O. BARTLEY has done himself a grave disservice in naming his richly erudite book, the fruit of wide scholarship and prolonged research, by so repellent and discouraging a title as *Teague, Shenkin and Sawney*,* names that are known only to a small coterie of enthusiastic students as the generalised names for Irishmen, Welshmen and Scots, in the same way that Tommy Atkins is a generalised name for soldiers. They represent the stock national characters which appeared in English drama from 1589 to 1800, the period covered by this book: and their history is examined with almost prodigal learning. I doubt if any play published in that period and containing such characters has escaped our author's eye.

The book is richly illuminated, not only with matters of stage representa-

tion, but with facts of history. Dr. Bartley, for example, refers to an ancient Irish custom of attaching the plough to the horse's tail. It was mentioned in Lithgow's *Rare Adventures* in 1619 and Heylin's *Cosmographie* in 1652, but was not mentioned in English drama until it appeared in Farquhar's *Love in a Bottle* in 1698. It may surprise Dr. Bartley to learn that this method of ploughing can still be observed in the West of Ireland. It was mentioned in the Eireann Parliament by Deputy John Dillon a few years ago as a sight still commonly to be seen.

The main purpose of his book is to trace the development of character drawing; and very illuminating he is on his subject. In its beginning it was not concerned with character at all, but with characteristics. Irishmen, Welshmen and Scots, on visiting or settling in, say, London, appeared there with all their native idiosyncrasies, accent, manners, clothes, clinging so closely

* *Teague, Shenkin and Sawney*: being an Historical Study of the Earliest Irish, Welsh and Scottish Characters in English Plays. Cork University Press, 25s.

around them that they seemed to sophisticated inhabitants of the capital as if they were foreigners, as, indeed, they might fairly be described, or even as primitive people. The English have always thought that anybody who differs from them in any respect must be comic, if not demented or depraved, and they gave grave offence to Irishmen, Welshmen and Scots by roaring with laughter every time they met a man who talked and dressed differently from themselves, whose habits and behaviour were not strictly in accord with theirs. This unmannerliness continues in our own times.

The dramatists, despite the lead Shakespeare gave them when he drew the character of Fluellen in *Henry V*, insisted, not on the nature of the Irishman, the Welshman or the Scot, but on his surface appearance. They imitated his speech, but paid no attention to the thought contained in the speech. No one who has seen or read *Henry V*, can remain unaware of the actuality of Fluellen. Here, beyond a shadow of a doubt, is an individual, a man with a distinguishable character which separates him, not only from Englishmen, but from his own countrymen, the Welsh. He is Fluellen, not Taffy or Shenkin or any generalised Welshman, and yet he is unmistakably Welsh. Observe the contrast between Fluellen and Gower and Pistol and Macmorris. All these men have the obvious characteristics of their sort, yet each of them is highly individualised: a character, not a bundle of conventional habits.

Dr. Bartley suggests that it was Ben Jonson who set the fashion of making stock figures take the place of living persons; and, indeed, Jonson played a prominent part in the process, not because he was too lazy to create people, but because he had a belief in types, rather than individuals. The battle between the Shakespearean and the Jonsonian authors has continued ever since, and is unlikely ever to be settled in favour of one or the other. It is, of course, easier to draw a type

than an individual. Old tricks are easily learnt. Dickens was liable at any moment to drop from character-creation into type-manufacture. In *Little Dorrit*, for example, he turns what had started as a characteristic in Mr. Meagles into a tiresome trick. When Tattycoram shows signs of losing her temper, Mr. Meagles always exclaims, "Take a little time—count twenty-five, Tattycoram," a request which was certain, in time, to provoke outrageous wrath, particularly when Mr. Meagles improved the counsel by saying, "Count another five-and-twenty, Tattycoram."

Here, I think, we have the profound difference between character and type, between observed fact and accepted trick. How much freshness of mind went into the making of Mr. Pickwick and Sam Weller, how much tired trick went into the making of Mr. Meagles and Tattycoram? Bernard Shaw, who was a master of character, a statement which will surprise those who insist that all his people were made in his own image, sometimes encouraged his detractors by letting his own personality overwhelm his character's. There is an example of this in *Major Barbara*. Barbara, after an open-air meeting, enquires about the amount of the collection, and is told that it is "four and tenpence," whereupon she turns to Snobby Price, an arrant humbug who professed repentance for sins he had not committed, and had delivered a moving confession during the meeting, "Oh, Snobby, if you had given your mother just one more kick, we should have got the whole five shillings!" One of the certainties of this play is that Barbara could never have made that remark. It was not in her nature to utter it. G.B.S. failed at this point to distinguish between the author and the author's creation.

It is plain that in the beginning of drama, the authors thought only in terms of types and superficial characteristics. A man or a woman in a morality play was not an individual:

he was a representative. He stood, not for himself, but for the general population. Everyman is not that odd fellow who lives at the other end of the street: he is a prototype of all the people who live at the other end of the street.

This habit of making types out of individuals loosened a little, especially in parts that were comic; but it remained substantial until the arrival of Shakespeare. The comic man's difference from the other persons in the play was only a matter of accent, of clothes, or of short wits. As Irishmen, Welshmen and Scots crowded into the metropolis, each bringing with him his peculiar dress, his strange and often unintelligible speech, and his simplicity of manner, the metropolitans, full of their slick and sophisticated ways, began to treat them as figures of fun and failed to perceive the salient fact about them, that they were individuals with opinions and beliefs and an outlook on life at least as sharp and distinct as those of the metropolitans themselves.

Character, indeed, was more likely to be developed in the days when villagers and even townsmen lived more intimately in their community than they do to-day, when we are all, in a large degree, influenced by exactly the same things: a tendency which is increasing and may eventually ruin us. Men and women in remote places wore clothes which had a significant connection with their homes, but these clothes, when they were brought to London, seemed no more than comic and absurd to the cockneys who never realised that their own clothes would have seemed equally comic and absurd to the country people; that their accent was unintelligible to an Irishman, a Welshman or a Scot or even to Englishmen from, say, Northumberland or the middle shires. The people in the country lived on their own thoughts. The newspapers they read, when there were any to read, were local papers. There were no "national" newspapers to spread uniformity of mind over the

whole country. The landowners and the parsons and the bigwigs of the village or town were not rendered uniform in voice by being sent to public schools. They spoke the language of the people they employed. This was still true in the eighteenth century. Boswell's father spoke in a Scots dialect. Parson Trulliber, in Fielding's *Joseph Andrews*, was essentially a local man, and so was Parson Abrahams, but each had his distinct character, each was entirely different from the other.

The tendency towards more and more uniformity of mind and behaviour is almost certain to deprive our descendants of the peculiar quality that makes a man a character: a tendency which is supported by legislation. Shaw remarks somewhere that the mob hates great men, partly because they feel their own inferiority, but more because they are afraid of greatness. Most of us have a shameful dislike of oddity, and detest and despise any person who breaks away from the rules and regulations. We are instantly conscious of any person at a social gathering whose dress is not "correct." A man who turns up at a party in a dinner jacket and a black tie when everybody else is wearing a white tie and tails, not only becomes an object of some scorn, but is himself acutely aware that he is out of step with all the other guests. Luckily, there is also a tendency in people to differentiate themselves from their neighbours. Even the Army failed to subdue this tendency. Soldiers were forbidden to wear Gawblimey caps and soft khaki collars and light khaki socks. But they wore them.

Dr. Bartley seems to me to exaggerate the number and quality of Irish players in England. So volatile a people would seem certain to produce many great players, but the fact is that, in proportion to their population, they have produced infinitely more civil servants than actors. The Irish are fairly good comedians and they can tell stories tolerably well, but they are not great actors and, except for the Anglo-

Irishmen, are insignificant authors. Nothing, however, will ever rid the English of their maudlin belief that every Irishman, south of the Boyne, is a near genius, full of charm and wit and unending gaiety, and liable at any moment to produce a masterpiece. They have only to hear a little bit of blarney in a soft voice, and instantly they began to writhe and wriggle. It is pathetic to see a man of Dr. Bartley's erudition falling for this sort of nonsense. If the English wish to realise what a great race is, let them look into their own hearts. What nation on this earth has produced such an array of great poets, from the time of Chaucer onwards, as the English? Let Dr. Bartley write down the names of all the eminent writers of every sort that were of English origin and then, having allowed for the Anglo-Irish from Congreve and Farquhar to Bernard Shaw, make a list of the purely Irish writers: and he will greatly surprise himself.

Like most of us, he finds it difficult to understand why, for more than a century, English drama fell into grave decline. Except for Tom Robertson, there was no dramatist of any worth in this country between the time of Sheridan and the rise of Pinero and Henry Arthur Jones, followed by what amounted almost to an epidemic of dramatists led by G.B.S. Robertson alone of those who wrote plays in that time of famine, dealt in character, and not in characteristics. The rest thought they had created a man when they had merely put different clothes on a low comedian. Dickens exposed the sort of drama they perpetrated in *Nicholas Nickleby*. Actors and actresses were no better than the dramatists. They, too, had their little bits and pieces of routine performance. When you had seen them in one part, you had seen them in all their parts. There is a legend that great acting flourishes only in times of drama decline, but, like many legends, it is false. We saw, during the Vedrenne-Barker seasons at the Court Theatre, how quickly acting rose to a high level

when the players had drama of quality to act. A man cannot carve a great statue out of putty or plasticine: he needs marble or granite.

The very name which was used for theatrical companies in the dramatic famine indicates their quality. They were called "stock companies." All their performances were stock stuff, tricks endlessly repeated. The same fault may be observed in many of the contemporary repertory theatres, where because of insufficient rehearsal, players are compelled not only to give scratch performances, but to trust to tricks to get them through the play. I once had the misfortune to meet the director of a repertory theatre who asserted with all the assurance of a man who did not know what he was talking about, that a week's rehearsal was enough for anybody. There were "producers" of plays then who had never, in any serious sense of the term, produced a play in their lives. They obtained a copy of the original prompt book and faithfully repeated what they read in it. It is not possible to produce a play with any sort of success in less than three weeks of continuous and rigorous rehearsal: and the players must be given time to mature their conception of their parts.

It is not easy to dramatise oneself, as every player has to do, as this or that person. How can the same man play Hamlet and Othello and Shylock without long rehearsal and deep thought?

Pinero and Henry Arthur Jones brought character, as distinct from characteristics, back to the stage, and Shaw and Galsworthy, reinforced by the powerful imagination of Granville-Barker, completed the task. Each of these dramatists thought of a man or a woman as an immortal soul, and not merely as a clothes peg on which to hang different garments. They started off with the belief that each of us is unique, that there never was anybody quite like us before, and that there will never be anybody quite like us again; and on that divinely-inspired faith they built their plays.

THEATRE BOOKSHELF

Pageants

Pageants, their Presentation and Production, by Anthony Parker. Bodley Head. 15s.

This practical and useful book should be a help to any Pageant-Director, however self-satisfied. The author is the grandson of Louis Napoleon Parker—a popular dramatist of his day—who was the creator of big pageants as we know them. In 1904 he was called upon to write a play to commemorate the twelfth centenary of the foundation of Sherborne Abbey, Dorset, and the famous school which grew out of the cloister. Parker had at one time been a master at Sherborne, and it was natural that he should be commissioned to write a text of something that could be performed in the ruins of Sherborne Castle. It was originally called a Folk-Play, which was not an attractive enough title to be "good box-office." Parker suddenly had the brilliant inspiration to call it a "Pageant," which gave it, in the eyes of the public, a more spectacular future than a dowdy Folk-Play. It was truly an enjoyable entertainment for a summer's afternoon, with its small manageable cast of about 250 actors, and an almost perfect setting of trees and old walls: the whole thing was peaceful and leisurely, like a village cricket match. As a young man (I was then in my early twenties) I glowed with happiness as I watched this, my first, Pageant; actors and audience were determined to enjoy themselves. Being a dramatist, L. N. Parker knew the right ingredients of comedy, tragedy, dance and spectacle to stir into his pudding; besides being a dramatist, he was a born organiser, and his grandson seems to have extended these gifts with modern sound equipment, lighting effects and telephones, but still working within the same well-tried convention.

Mr. Anthony Parker's book tells the organisers of Pageants everything they ought to know, and may deter some from entering upon their venture too lightheartedly. Financially, Pageants seldom do more than pay their way—one is terribly dependent upon the English climate, which can make or mar the whole effort, and it is heartbreaking to see months of work ruined by a downpour. But in spite of all the difficulties, Pageants were very popular up to the 1939 war.

I still consider the difficulty is largely financial, and perhaps only if the sponsoring of Pageants is taken over by large bodies and corporations will it be possible to present them. Just after the war, a big steel company desired to give a Pageant on the steel industry. To my suggestion that it would be difficult to find sufficient actors they replied that they already had 2,000 men willing to take part.

Here was a case where the two first difficulties had been overcome, for I think we have lost, in all classes, those people who have leisure to devote to public work of this kind. It may be that in future only small places with a famous history, or ones that are the birthplaces of distinguished persons, will be able to work up a cast of about 300 people who can undertake a month to six weeks' rehearsal. Again, the smaller the play presented the more likely is it to have artistic unity. I have known pageants that have run into thousands of performers and all the work that that entailed resulted only in something that was in bad taste and very boring as well. A certain amount of bad taste has always been associated with Pageants; when one reconstructs in imagination the Jacobean masques created by Ben Jonson and Inigo Jones, two great artists working for courtly amateurs, the result is depressingly ostentatious.

Boredom is the real enemy of the director: he must prevent each episode from looking exactly like the last with a different period hat! Surprise is the hardest thing to achieve, though of course one does not want too many shocks. The seats are in most cases extremely uncomfortable, so the audience cannot sleep through a sultry afternoon, but they can and will fidget and damn the whole thing. Speed is absolutely essential and there should be no pauses between episodes.

A prospective director will find the appendices to the book very useful, especially Appendix D which gives a specimen page for a Pageant-Master's working script. It reminds one of a page from the Continental Railway Time-table.

W. NUGENT MONCK

Elizabethan to Victorian

Ben Jonson of Westminster, by Marchette Chute. Hale. 18s. **The Early Irish Stage**, by William Smith Clark. O.U.P. 30s. **The Theatrical Public in the Time of Garrick**, by Harry William Pedicord. King's Crown Press, N.Y. 32s. **Mrs. Siddons, Tragic Actress**, by Yvonne Ffrench. Verschoyle. 21s. **Emigrant in Motley**. Ed. by J. M. D. Hardwick. Rockliff. 21s.

Taken chronologically these books present the English theatre at different stages of development from Elizabethan to Victorian times, including Irish offshoots.

Ben Jonson of Westminster is sound scholarship charmingly disguised as vivid narrative. Ben's personality towers above the mass of evidence that has gone to create it. His progress from bricklayer to Court poet is faithfully recorded, together with all the elements paradoxically mixed in him—grace and brutality, devoutness and paganism, refinement and coarseness—paradoxes which were also those of his age.

We do not only see Ben in this delightful book, but the whole development of the contemporary theatre, particularly the emergence of the masque, enthusiastically adopted by Queen Anne as her favourite kind of court entertainment, in which she and favoured ladies could have leading parts. In all this Ben Jonson had a hand; he was an era in himself, extending from Elizabeth I to Charles I. Miss Chute has admirably caught the man and his times.

The Early Irish Stage is an authoritative history of the Irish theatre from medieval times to the early eighteenth century, when the idea of an essentially Irish theatre first dawned. Mr. Clark emphasises the paradox between the innate dramatic sense of the Irish and their slowness to evolve a theatre; for it was "English authority rather than popular demand" that first got a theatre going; not only was the early Irish theatre modelled on the English, but it was English managers, and even English playwrights who sustained it and indeed introduced the first Irish elements. A single figure dominates; that of the venerable (and English) Thomas Ashbury, Master of the Revels in Ireland "under five monarchs, from Charles II to George I", who during his forty-five years' management, turned the Smock Alley theatre into Dublin's Theatre Royal, rapidly to become the nursery for London's best actors. This book is indispensable for students and has excellent appendices and bibliography.

An equally scholarly but not so well-digested account is presented in *The Theatrical Public in the Time of Garrick*, a labricious compilation of statistics of seating capacities, average daily receipts, theatre-going percentages of population, social status of audience, etc. The most interesting section is that which deals with the taste of the audience and Garrick's ways of meeting it.

In *Mrs. Siddons, Tragic Actress*, every page is of interest. This is a haunting, compelling biography, which has succeeded in capturing the very quality of Sarah Siddons' acting—a rare achievement. Her tremendous tragic power is conveyed not only in descriptions of frenzied, fainting audiences, but in her effect on fellow-actors, one unfortunate man being frozen into oblivion of his part by her glittering eye, to be recalled by a tap on the shoulder from the enchantress and the low murmur, "Mr. Young—recollect yourself." There are many subtle analyses of her art and a thrilling description of her Lady Macbeth. Majesty seems to have been her great quality, together with a rare gift of identifying herself with her parts. A great woman too, as manifest in her courage in the face of cruel calumny, her labours as breadwinner, wife and mother, her sense of honour and duty. This is a standard biography, moving as well as informative, and lacking only an index.

Emigrant in Molley presents two more

warriors of the theatre. It consists of unpublished letters written by Charles and Ellen Kean while on the tour in Australia and America which they made in advanced middle age. Little light is thrown on their acting methods, though they quote one malicious newspaper accusing them of smothering Shakespeare in upholstery. The interest lies in their social success, the "wicked tricks" of the jealous Barry Sullivan, and in their general reception—"This is a country for artisans not artists . . . They could not at first comprehend our acting tragedy like ladies and gentlemen." Ellen charmingly records her husband's triumphs—"Papa is none the worse for his Ball and gets anonymous bunches of roses from young ladies with tender notes on pink paper." For her many joys lie outside the theatre, such as collecting ferns and insects, bringing home a little green frog, cooking a good dinner. Charles is more self-centred, preoccupied with his gout, his hoarseness, his "suction teeth" which proved a failure. The tour was the gallant, pathetic last fling of ageing stars, impressive not only for their art, but for their fortitude, integrity and high principles.

All these books are reminders that the theatre has been created and sustained by men and women who were not merely players but great and courageous men and women.

MARJORIE THOMPSON

The Producer and his Matter

The Director in the Theatre, by Hugh Hunt. Routledge. 10s. 6d. **Drama in Performance**, by Raymond Williams. Muller. 8s. 6d. **Theatre Programme**. Ed. J. C. Trewin. Muller. 15s.

It is an excellent idea that each year (under the Rockefeller Foundation) a distinguished man of the theatre should be invited to give four lectures at Bristol University, and that these should later be reprinted in book form. Last year the Foundation scored a palpable hit with Michael Redgrave's brilliant and thought-provoking series on an actor's problems; and it is not to disparage Hugh Hunt's high ability in the theatre to say that his lectures make a less striking and provocative book. After all, it is an adventitious piece of luck in this context if a director or actor turns out to have the writer's gift as well.

Mr. Hunt is too honest and capable an exponent of the director's craft, too little the single-minded megalomaniac, to thrust across at us a theory without reservations; his breadth of experience would immediately remind him of the exceptions that would help to discount any over-positive Hunt Method. Equally, though, we cannot help noting that Stanislavski's exposition of his Method provided a more memorable book than this, the cultured, carefully considered attitude of a good play-director and notable organiser, for whose work in the theatre we may all be grateful.

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Mr. Hunt considers his subject under four heads: the Director and the Art of the Theatre, and the Author, and the Actor, and the Public, with two other lectures on Contemporary Shakespearean Production (delivered at Yale) added for good measure. The meat of the book lies, I think, in the lecture involving the author. Mr. Hunt is broad-minded and level-headed enough not to minimise the importance of the author, but fundamentally he inclines towards the Craig *mystique* of the Art of the Theatre, and he quotes with approval Granville Barker's dictum that "The Art of the Theatre is the art of acting, first last and all the time."

It is a view with which I happen to disagree, being convinced that in the beginning is the Word, and that if the Word is subtracted or under-rated, what remains may be stimulating and remarkable but hardly aspires to the condition of an Art. Those of us who hold this view accept the proper order of precedence as Author, Actor, Director, and must feel that Mr. Hunt's approach suffers from the fact that his basic conception is slightly off-centre. Only slightly, for he is reasonable and non-dogmatic, but his natural bias in favour of his own function may be seen in the clever and skilful examination of the ways in which *A Midsummer Night's Dream* has been produced; Mr. Hunt conducts this in the form of speeches for the Prosecution and Defence. It is the best thing in the book, and I could wish for more space in which to support the Prosecution.

Probably Mr. Hunt is most at home in dealing with Actors—as indeed he should be. And I must not give the impression that because the book is not self-assertive it is dull; Mr. Hunt's strong suit is salutary common sense (As witness: "Acting . . . is never complete naturalism, or we should neither hear nor see properly what the actor was saying or doing."), and there is the eternal fascination of remarks which take one behind the scenes. All this being so, and with Mr. Hunt's sensible moderation so evident, I was the more sorry to find him turning for a panacea to that old Shangri-La of a National Theatre. Mr. Hunt of all people should have seen that our national genius precludes a *Comédie anglaise*, and that although subsidy is certainly desirable, our theatre should no more be regularised officially and defined than the British Constitution be written down.

Mr. Williams' little book will be found useful and of interest by many students of the drama, though it might have received the benison of bigger print. He examines the conditions at the original performance of certain plays and passages from them: the *Antigone*, English Medieval Drama, *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Hamlet*, and *The Seagull*. Much scholarship and research has been summarised here.

Theatre Programme is an assessment of the present state of affairs theatrical in this country

by fourteen critics, expertly edited and introduced by J. C. Trewin and with a charming piece by his wife. Other contributors include Ivor Brown (a lively picture of the modern Scots theatre), J. W. Lambert on verse drama, and Charles Landstone who sets out to refute the idea that the provinces tend to be "a cultural desert" and (I think) rather succeeds in proving that they are. It is an anthology to provoke and please every theatregoer, and the critical standard is let down only by Ian Bevan's somewhat inadequate review of the Music Hall. I am still wondering what Mr. Bevan means by "verbal puns."

PETER FORSTER

Two Worlds

The Way of My World, by Ivor Brown. Collins. 16s. *The Charles Laughton Story*, by Kurt Singer. Robert Hale. 15s. *My Dear America*, by Alan Dent. Arthur Barker. 12s. 6d.

Two worlds here, the Old and the New. Ivor Brown's is the Old, and happily so: in his autobiography he does glance at New York, but only for a couple of pages. He is at home in England and Scotland; all his readers, north or south of the Border, must be glad to have the company of the major drama critic of his time.

Anything Ivor Brown writes is burnished by his generosity, common sense, and love of the language. It is a delight in this book to observe the sanity and urbanity (the kind of jingle he would never permit) with which he writes about the arts, education, and life generally. He is a freeman of his world, and it is the world of enduring culture. In years ahead, when coterie shrieks and the fashions of a fortnight are forgotten—and we have only to think of some of the hysteria of the 'thirties to know how soon London forgets—Ivor Brown's name and his work will be secure. The theatre owes much to him. Three chapters in his book will speak especially to readers of *DRAMA*; the pages headed "The Critic's Craft" are the wisest words on the matter in our day. "It is always possible," he holds, "to dismiss the trash without damage to the sensibility. Reputation of a kind can be gained by loss of manners. But no critical reputation thus won has been worth the having." That deserves italic type. It is the voice of our wittiest writer, a man who has never mistaken cruelty for wit or gloried in the lash.

Ivor Brown may be apparently shy and undemonstrative—it is a way with a Scot—but he has seen everything that has been going on, and he shows in this book, a very loyal one, how he can read character. I cannot imagine anything better, in their fashion, than his pages on the two great editors, Garvin of *The Observer* and Scott of the *Manchester Guardian*. "A man with such an appetite for life," he writes of Garvin, "was bound to raise the eagerness and the gusto of others." I am sure that Ivor Brown's book will stimulate the

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eagerness of all who work genuinely for the arts of which he is a master.

On page 250 he writes of Charles Laughton, "the young man from Scarborough who in his first appearances took every kind of minor role in Sunday night performances and out-of-the-way productions. Suddenly a secondary figure on the stage would leap into the forefront of attention, not because he was selfishly obtruding in the manner of a bad actor, but because he was so much in the skin of a part that the part, not he, burst out across the footlights and took one by the throat. His Protean quality was then amazing." I remember especially the Angelo (which Ivor Brown also mentions; it was, by the way, in the season of 1933-34). Mr. Singer, in an excellent straightforward book, says too little of this season—though there is a fine photograph of the precisian whose blood was "very snow-broth." Naturally, Hollywood has most of the space, and we cannot forgive Hollywood for turning a potentially great actor into another film star. But Laughton remains a strange, independent personality; Mr. Singer, without forcing, has given what seems to be a very fair impression.

Alan ("Jock") Dent has been, endearingly, to America, all over the place: Laughton must have been one of the few people he missed. He enjoyed meeting America, and America enjoyed meeting him; this journal gives proof. "Socially," he says, not too seriously, of his manner on the voyage home, "I am detached and reserved and unapproachable except by stewards." It is perhaps the least characteristic phrase in a book (of typical friendliness and shrewdness) for all of his friends from Ayr to Arkansas, Ailsa Craig to Albuquerque.

J. C. TREWIN

Pictorial Records

Shakespeare at the Old Vic, by Roger Wood and Mary Clarke. A. and C. Black. 16s. The **Sadler's Wells Opera**, by Michael Stapleton. A. and C. Black. 10s. 6d. **Theatre World Annual No. 5**, by Frances Stephens. Rockcliff. 18s.

Shakespeare at the Old Vic is a record of the first year (1953-54) of the Company's plan to present all thirty-six plays in the First Folio. It has 120 action photographs, notes on the six productions already given, and is most attractively laid out. Thirteen operas from their repertoire have been chosen to illustrate the work of Sadler's Wells Opera. The story of each is briefly told and there is a profusion of pictures.

To refresh our memories of a year's play-going (which was not without its highlights, for it saw the first productions of *The Confidential Clerk*, *The Burning Glass*, *I Am a Camera*, *Marching Song*, *The Prisoner*, and *The Dark is Light Enough*) comes *Theatre World Annual*, an illustrated review of West End productions, with a record of plays and players.

Theatrical Companion to Shaw, by Raymond Mander and Joe Mitchenson. Rockliff, 42s.

The Mander and Mitchenson Theatre Collection is an almost inexhaustible mine of information, and the owners have quarried from it a compendium of all the first performances of Shaw, with an appendix on Shaw seasons and comparative lists of London casts for each play. Most of the articles are culled from other sources, including DRAMA, and add up to a well-balanced survey. The book will be of permanent value to students of the great dramatist, as well as the nostalgic theatregoer. It is a pity that the reproduction of the many photographs of first performances should, perhaps inevitably, be so indifferent.

A Great Manager

Philip Rodway, by his daughters. Cornish, Birmingham. 15s. 6d.

This memoir of a great manager of the Theatre Royal, Birmingham, is all too sadly topical at a moment when the theatre's demolition is announced. His daughters' labour of love is a tribute rather than a biography. It has value as a theatrical record because every detail has been put in and one needs detail to get a true impression of a vanished age. And alas! the age of the manager who was a monarch in his theatre is no more. The combines which ended Rodway's reign have ushered in a new, impersonal age. Rodway was a fine personality, whose smile had a great worth for his patrons and his artists alike. Meeting him in this artless tale one realises how greatly such personalities enriched our theatres, and how much of the tradition that still survives we owe to such men as Philip Rodway.

E. M. B.

Long Plays

The Last of the Incas, by G. Wilson Knight. Published by the author. The University, Leeds. 5s.

The School for Wives, adapted by Miles Malleson. French. 5s. **Toad in the Hole**, by Maurice McLoughlin. Evans. 5s. **Bless This House**, by E. Eynon Evans. French. 4s. **Job for the Boy**, by Dennis Driscoll. Evans. 5s. **The Way the Wind Blows**, by Derek Benfield. Deane. 5s. **The Advancement of Mr. Simpkin**, by Jack Last. Deane. 5s.

The study of ancient civilisations has an irresistible fascination for many and Mr. Knight's play, which is an admirable dramatisation of four chapters of Prescott's *Conquest of Peru*, would undoubtedly interest the student. To what extent it would appeal to a general audience not familiar with the historical facts is a matter for conjecture. The play follows very closely the historian's data in this story in which great generalship and courage go hand in hand with shameful perfidy. There is plenty of movement and colour

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This book has been written chiefly to cover amateur productions and to help producers, designers, and others concerned with the use of light on the stage and only incidentally in the use of electrical apparatus. Technicalities are considered only in such detail as is necessary to inform those who wish to understand exactly what standard stage lighting will do without necessarily understanding the electrical and mechanical reasons involved.

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"Our affection for *A Month in the Country* has unfortunately cost us Turgenev's other plays . . . It is the kind of ironic disservice a masterpiece may do its maker." *The Times*.

THE BACHELOR

By IVAN TURGENEV. Adapted by MILES MALLESON

This was Turgenev's third play, written in 1849, and his first to be performed in St. Petersburg. Mikhail Shchepkin played the part of Moshkin, and his reading of the letter in which his ward is renounced by her fiancé was said to have been interrupted with tears of genuine indignation.

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Leonard Mosley in the *Daily Express*

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C. A. Lejeune in the *Observer*

Some of the cosiest, homeliest humour I've seen or heard for a long time.

Star

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I found it quite enchanting . . . a little masterpiece, written by a genius—no less—in the portrayal of character.

Slough *Observer*

Miles Malleson has brought it a scintillating brightness.

Windsor *Express*

At Derby

*The pleasure of the ninth wave—the knowledge that at intervals there will come a week that is not only interesting, but more interesting than usual. Such a week opened . . . with Miles Malleson's adaptation of Turgenev's "*The Bachelor*".*

Derbyshire *Advertiser*

At Cambridge

How cunningly the first act is written . . . We laugh, we relish . . . and we are touched and concerned for the future of these vulnerable souls . . . A touch here and there, and behind the anecdote we seem to feel the whole of Russian middle-class life a century ago.

The Times

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and no lack of dramatic situations. Judicious cutting of the Inca's long speeches would improve Act III. (1 set, 26 m., 6 w.)

The School for Wives is a new adaptation of Molière's brilliant comedy in a free version—not to be confused with free verse, although the layout of the script might convey that impression—by that very versatile man of the theatre, Miles Malleson. This version, presented by the Bristol Old Vic last year, preserves the sparkling gaiety of the original and the period atmosphere is admirably maintained. Here is excellent material for a cast of six men and two women. Presentation offers no difficulty.

It is difficult to classify *Toad in the Hole*. The author describes it as a comedy of natural humour "well within the range of the amateur company," but it is open to question whether the conjuring tricks which are its mainspring would not tax the average S.M., in spite of several pages of instructions. A professor who does not believe in occultism is at odds with an Austrian doctor who practises black magic. The professor's ungovernable temper calls forth an angry retort from the daily help, an old Irishwoman who has picked up some gibberish from an ancient tome in the library, with the result that the professor is turned into a frog before the eyes of the audience. For most of the rest of the play he lives in an aquarium in full view. (1 set, 5 m., 6 w.)

Bliss this House, a family comedy, is set in the Midlands and in the author's beloved Wales. Although not a very distinguished piece, it has some amusing situations and the dialogue is quite good. Rather too much of the humour is left to the main character which results in some dull patches when she is off the stage. (3 sets, 6 m., 7 w.)

Job for the Boy is a lively and entertaining little comedy in a North Country setting. The characters are very varied and nicely balanced. The dialogue is very readable and what dialect there is should present no difficulty. (1 set, 4 m., 3 w.)

Derek Benfield, whose plays have become popular with provincial repertory companies, offers here a domestic comedy with a serious motif woven into its somewhat loose texture. The play makes no great demands on the cast although the two juvenile characters are a bit of a strain on one's credulity. The final scene is perhaps the best and could be quite moving. (1 set, 6 m., 5 w.)

The Advancement of Mr. Simpkin includes four separate murders and ends with a bomb outrage, which sounds grim enough to satisfy the most ghoulish. Actually, the emphasis is on comedy, of which the author has a good sense; even the killings are almost lighthearted. Mr. Last is an author of promise, but he should resist the temptation to clutter up his dialogue, otherwise good, with wisecracks which are often irrelevant. (1 set, 5 m., 5 w.)

A. H. WHARRIER

Short Plays

Who's Who in Heaven, by Clifford Bax. Golden Head Press. 12s. 6d. A birthday tribute to a friend in polished rhymed verse, tastefully produced by a private press. Samuel Pepys, Lizzie Siddall and Phryne meet in heaven. (1 m., 2 f.)

Cheers for Miss Valentine, by Elizabeth Milne. Evans. 1s. 6d. Comedy of Village Institute preparing a "Welcome Home" for local heroine. (10 f.)

The Petition, by Margot Bryant. Evans. 1s. 6d. Mr. Windermere's family and friends are summoned to a mysterious court to discuss his burden of ill-health. (4 m., 3 f., 1 boy of 14.)

Wedding Reflection, by James Hesketh. Evans. 1s. 6d. A wedding in the Welfare family and trouble over the photograph. Comedy. (6 m., 6 f.)

Geranium, by Arnold Ridley. Evans. 1s. 6d. Comedy of trouble over geranium won by cheating at parish whist drive. (2 m., 5 f.)

The Game and the Onlooker, by Ursula Tighe Hopkins. French. 1s. 6d. Well meaning best friend nearly wrecks the lives of two people. (2 m., 2 f.)

The End of the Story, by Richard Thomas. French. 1s. 6d. Drama of accidental meeting in hospital ward. (7 f.)

Trouble in Arcady, by Howard Agg. French. 1s. 6d. Comedy of unwanted sister from America and how she is persuaded to leave. (6 f.)

The Elopement, by Elma Ottey. French. 1s. 6d. Romantic comedy set in 1860. (5 f.)

And Then There Were None, by R. F. Delderfield. French. 1s. 6d. Comedy of suffragette conversions in Liberal M.P.'s household during General Election of 1906. (2 m., 4 f.)

The Man Who Lost a Day, by Dan Sutherland. French. 1s. 6d. A fortune teller's prophecy comes true in an unexpected way. (4 m., 3 f.)

April Dawn, by Philip Johnson. French. 1s. 6d. Comedy of man who wins competition and loses at the same time. (2 m., 4 f.)

Happy The Bride, by Barbara Bingley. French. 1s. 6d. Period play of strange wedding morning. Costume 1849. (6 f.)

First Catch Your Hare, by Barbara Bingley. French. 1s. 6d. A poacher is saved from deportation. Period 1827. (1 m., mute, 4 f.)

The Young Carlyles, by Barbara Bingley and N. Melville Shepherd. French. 1s. 6d. An early incident in the stormy marriage of Thomas and Jane Carlyle. Period 1827. (2 m., 4 f.)

My Hills, My Home, by Glyn Griffiths. French. 1s. 6d. Welsh tragedy of army eviction. (4 m., 2 f.)

Isolation at Eyam, by Joyce Denny. French. 1s. 6d. Drama of plague in Derbyshire village. Period 1665. (9 f.)

The King's Daughters, by Juanita Hayes. Garnet Miller. 2s. 6d. Drama of the daughters of George III. Period 1800 (7 f.)

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New Plays Quarterly. No. 27. Subscription. "Shetland Yarn," by Alexander Scott. Scottish comedy set in the Shetlands. Period 1588. (3 m., 3 f.) "The Parents Propose," by Yves Cabrol. Light comedy in the French manner. (4 m., 5 f.) "Nitro," by Anthony Booth. Drama set in Headquarters of Air Transport Company in South America. (4 m., 3 f.) "Hasty Judgment," by Nora Ratcliff. Another incident in the lives of the Bradby Family. (1 m., 4 f.)

DONALD FITZJOHN

Books and Plays Received

Allen & Unwin: Euripides' Ion, trans. Gilbert Murray. 7s. 6d. ("The Confidential Clerk" was based on this play.)

Evans Plays: Dear Murderer, by St. John L. Clowes. *I Am A Camera*, by John van Druten. *It's Never Too Late*, by Felicity Douglas. 5s. each.

Samuel French: Anastasia, by Marcelle Maurette adapted by Guy Bolton. *The Return*, by Bridget Boland. *Quadrille*, by Noel Coward. *Escapade*, by Roger Macdougall. *Marching Song*, by John Whiting. *Carrington, V.C.*, by Dorothy and Campbell Christie. *Birthday Honours*, by Paul Jones. 5s. each.

Heinemann's Drama Library: Six Characters in Search of an Author, by Pirandello. Trans. Frederick May. *Two Saints' Plays—St. Chad of the Seven Wells*, by Leo Lehman, and *Man's Estate*, by Robert Gittings. 5s. each vol.

Methuen: Arden Shakespeare: King John, ed. E. A. J. Honigsmann. *Cymbeline*, ed. J. M. Nosworthy. 18s. each.

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REPERTORY ENTERPRISE

Some of the plays given their first production during the last quarter of 1954, compiled from material made available by Spotlight Casting Directory.

BIRMINGHAM Repertory Theatre. *Murder Will Speak*, by Michael Hutton Squire. 2 f., 9 m. Chinese thriller.

BOGNOR Repertory Co. *The Fall of the Sparrow*, by Mabel Tyrell and Peter Coke. 3 f., 4 m. Story of four people whose lives are shadowed by a secret.

BROMLEY New Theatre. *Straight From Heaven*, by Royce Ryton and Robert Sloman. 5 f., 6 m. *Three Steps To Eternity*, by John Wooldridge. 2 f., 6 m. Set in haunted belfry.

DERBY Little Theatre. *The Forgotten Element*, by Lawrence Rayburn. 3 f., 7 m.

EASTBOURNE, Devonshire Park Theatre. *The Merry Christmas Tree*, by Kennedy Holt. 8 f. 11 m.

FARNHAM Repertory Company. *Knives on the Table*, by John Maxwell. 4 f., 3 m. Set in house on small island in lonely forest bayou in Louisiana.

FOLKESTONE, Leas Pavilion. *The Olympian*, by Gertrude Jennings. 7 f., 4 m. Comedy.

NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE Playhouse. *The Un-suspected*, by Ivor Dean. 3 f., 9 m. Thriller set in converted inn on Cornish cliff.

OLDHAM Repertory Theatre Club. *The Veil*, by Hugh Beresford. 5 f., 4 m.

PALMERS GREEN, Intimate Players. *The Jovial Parasite*, by Raymond Dyer. 3 f., 6 m. *Recipe For Murder*, by Arnold Ridley. 3 f., 5 m.

PERTH Theatre Company. *Georgia Story*, by Constance Cox. 3 f., 5 m.

SWANSEA Theatre Company. *The Running Tramp*, by Michael Davies. 1 f., 8 m. Set on an ancient tramp steamer, S.S. "Good Endeavour".

WINDSOR Repertory Co. *Let's Talk Turkey*, by Dudley Leslie and Audrey Erskine-Lindop. 3 f., 9 m. Anglo-American relations in East Anglia.

WORTHING Theatre Company. *Serious Charge*, by Philip King. 4 f., 5 m.

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B.D.L. MEMBERS' PAGES

President and Chairman

We felicitate our President, the Viscount Esher, on becoming in the New Year's Honours a Knight Grand Cross of the Order of the British Empire (G.B.E.). Lord Esher's "services to the Arts" are manifold: the National Trust, the London Society, the Society for the Preservation of Ancient Buildings compete for his interest with his principal love, the theatre. The Standard Contract made with every actor bears his name as a witness to his wisdom and skill as a negotiator; the Old Vic and the Arts Council owe much to his care. So does the League, and we feel honoured in his honouring.

Ivor Brown is our new Chairman, elected by the Council on January 14th. This choice is universally regarded as a happy one, and we are fortunate in that he has accepted the office. As a critic he has had the love as well as the respect of the professional theatre for a generation; as a native of Scotland, and for many years a writer on the *Manchester Guardian*, he is a Briton rather than a Londoner. From the beginning of C.E.M.A. (now the Arts Council) till he became Editor of *The Observer* in 1942 he was responsible for the help they gave to drama in war-time; and having served on League committees before the war he is well acquainted with our aims. We offer him a warm welcome.

Junior Drama League

New opportunities for useful extension continue to present themselves. The four "Lectures for Young People" given at Wyndham's Theatre at Christmastide drew an average audience of 500; and over 100 of these filled to overflowing two sets of morning classes organised by the Training Department. The keen young theatre-lovers want a Junior Drama League, a centre open at every holiday and for week-end courses. To answer this demand comes a most generous gift from Lord Howard de Walden, enabling us to put in order the ground floor of No. 10 Fitzroy Square. This will provide room for classes and lectures, and for the display of designs, models and other useful matter. Of course, the Department really needs a theatre, but this extension will enable it to receive its young students—and its adults too—in a place planned as a Theatre Centre.

Exhibition at the Opening

Further good fortune attends us: we can open our new Centre with an unique Exhibition. Norah Lambourne had assembled for the postponed International Exhibition a collection of young people's work in Drama of extraordinary interest. This ranges from photo-

graphs of informal classroom drama and movement, and of school productions, to designs, model stages, costumes and properties made by children and young people. They will now be shown at No. 10 Fitzroy Square, opening on Saturday, April 23rd (Shakespeare's birthday), and lasting until Sunday, May 1st, inclusive: hours 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. No one to whom Drama in Education means anything should miss the chance of seeing this show, and hearing the talks which will be given in connection with it. School parties will be welcome. Details will be sent on application to the Training Department, B.D.L.

National Festival

I have been asked for an explanation of the decision made last Whitsuntide by the National Committee for Community Drama to give a letter category instead of marks to each entrant. I would first note that on this Committee of twelve are many of the most experienced organisers in our Festival. They felt that the people who were getting most out of the Festival, both in instruction and enjoyment, were the ones who paid least attention to marks and particularly that the adjudicators' written comments would receive more attention if there were no marks to deflect the eye. Marks sometimes, they found, led to odious comparisons and bad feeling, and sometimes also to misunderstanding. They believed that the letter category would tell the team what it really needed to know—the standard of its work—and that constructive criticism in the written report, given at all stages, would have more effect if marks were not attached to it.

The categories are as follows: A (excellent), 75 marks and above; B (good), 60 and above; C (fair), 40 and above; D (poor), below 40.

The Festival is still breaking new ground. The Area Finals of both West and North are in fresh places. The West (June 4th) goes to Jephson Gardens Pavilion, Leamington Spa, a pleasant and centrally situated resort where the word "Gala" is sure to be justified. The North (May 21st) goes to Doncaster, again easy of access and blessed with a civically-owned Arts Theatre: a warm welcome is offered by a keen local committee who have lost their own festival and regard our visit as an auspicious event.

The East (May 23rd) always offers a trip to London; it is the best centre for this widely scattered area and the Scala Theatre in Charlotte Street is easily accessible. Norman Marshall as adjudicator is a "draw" to all who want the Festival at its best; he widens the horizon, using the practical detail to introduce the general judgment.

In Wales, hard work by the Area Committee has brought a great access of strength

to the Festival: seven counties are in this year, and I am going to visit them during the week which culminates in the Final at Aberdare on May 21st. A notable accession this year is a week's festival at Bristol sponsored by the "Colston Hall Committee" which promotes entertainment for the Borough. E.M.B.

B.D.L. Play Award

The Festival of Original Full-length Plays, in its second year, has already drawn entries from eleven companies, and three have been seen by Miss Frances Mackenzie, the adjudicator, who is visiting each company in its own hall. The aim of this Festival is to encourage the production of new plays by affiliated societies; it is warmly supported by the League of Dramatists, and the Award of £25 bears the name of Wynyard Browne, Chairman for this year. This Award, and an invitation to appear in the League's Theatre Week, is given to the company which presents the winning play, not to the author. Results of the competition, which closes on May 31st, will be announced at the Final of the National Festival of Community Drama, at the Scala Theatre, on June 20th.

Long and Short Courses

The Ninth Full-Time Course for Instructors in Amateur Drama is being held from April 12th to June 17th this year. It is interesting to note how well known the courses are becoming abroad for out of the many inquiries so far received over half are from overseas.

The League, always anxious to encourage new dramatists, held its Fifth Week-end Course for Playwrights on February 5th and 6th. This was attended by thirty-five playwrights. Two of the MS. plays submitted for criticism were of exceptional quality and several more would be worthy of production in the Original Play Festival. Societies who like to put on original plays should write to us and we will put them in touch with the authors.

Drama of Three Countries

Ten lectures on Twentieth Century Drama in France, the U.S.A. and Britain are being held weekly in the School of Oriental and African Studies, Malet Street, W.C.1, at 7.30 on Wednesday evenings from January 26th to March 30th. These lectures have been arranged by the University's Department of Extra-Mural Studies in association with the British Drama League, the Fulbright Commission and the Institut Français du Royaume-Uni. The series will constitute a comparative Survey of Dramatists and the Theatre and each will end with a discussion. Two of the lectures, "British Poetic Drama since 1920" and the Concluding Survey, will be given by Mr. E. Martin Browne. Tickets for single lectures 2s. 6d. at the door or from the Cashier

(Extension Lectures "B"), University of London, Senate House, W.C.1.

Frank Sladen-Smith

By the death of Frank Sladen-Smith DRAMA loses a valued contributor, and the amateur theatre a man of rare individuality and artistic integrity. The Unnamed Society of Manchester which has always stood for civilised theatre, often against heavy odds, was mainly his creation. His plays have a wit that will keep them alive; and many amateurs owe their inspiration to him. He was a consistent, unsentimental idealist.

Gordon Douglas Memorial

Mr. James Ford, a lifelong friend of Gordon Douglas, is staging Obeys' *The Hopeful Travellers* as a memorial production to him on June 8th, 9th and 10th. The Governors of the David Lewis Theatre in Liverpool are giving the use of the theatre as their donation to the fund. Theatre Week patrons will remember Mr. Ford's fine production of *The Righteous Are Bold* at Harrogate in 1952. He expects to have even the smallest part taken by an experienced actor, for all Liverpool amateurs will regard this as an opportunity of making a special contribution in memory of one of their leaders.

Village on the Tax

Among Resolutions passed by member groups calling for abolition of Entertainments Tax was the following from the Village Players, Great Hucklow:—

"Whilst recognising the concession made to the Amateur Theatre by the remission of Entertainment Tax on Theatrical Productions by Amateur Companies, the Great Hucklow Village Players strongly urge that representations be made to the Chancellor of the Exchequer to take steps to remove this Tax from the living Theatre as a whole. It is to the professional Theatre that the many thousands of amateurs throughout the country turn for inspiration and example, and they view with concern the closing of many professional theatres, working on a very small margin of profit, and still further affected by new forms of mechanical entertainment. If these theatres are not to be lost to the community, some form of tax relief is urgent and imperative."

Aid for Theatres

The Pilgrim Trust has made a gift of £2,000 for improvements to the Hyde Festival Theatre in Cheshire. This is not the kind of venture the Trust usually supports, but it saw a special value in an active theatre created by local effort in a theatreless district. The money will be used for improving the heating of the building and reshaping the upper room so that

it can be used as a community centre. The theatre was originally a cinema and billiards hall and the work of reconstructing and renovating was done by volunteers with a little professional assistance for the more skilled jobs. £5,000 had already been raised locally for the purchase and reconditioning of the building before the Pilgrim Trust grant was made. We congratulate "those who help themselves" and wish them continued success.

The Arts Council has followed the lead given by the City of Oxford in offering aid to the Playhouse. This charming little theatre was largely created by Eric Dance, and his death in the war left it to Oxford in general to maintain enthusiasm. The struggle has been unrelenting, and even now the Playhouse has only a few months' respite. The grandiose University Theatre project on the one hand, and that for a little theatre for amateurs on the other, will both suffer if the already existing repertory theatre cannot win enough support. We hope that the citizens, "Town" and "Gown" alike, will make good use of the generosity shown to Oxford drama.

O'Casey at Croydon

In producing Sean O'Casey's *Purple Dust* last November, the Croydon Players did a public service, for the play has not yet been given professionally in London. This is the more surprising because of its compelling gaiety and charm. To the majesty of O'Casey's tragedies it provides a welcome contrast, a hilarious evening in which emotions are purged not by pity and terror but by laughter.

Two eccentric Englishmen, having possessed themselves during the war of two Irish mistresses and a Tudor mansion in the wilds of Clune na Geera, proceed to furnish the house in Jacobean style to recapture the atmosphere of the past. Unaccustomed to country life and the ways of Irish employees, they suffer countless mishaps and deceptions, in the course of which they demolish a wall of the house, shoot a cow, fall off a horse, and destroy priceless antiques. Finally the river rises and they are lucky to get out with their lives. Of these situations the cast took full advantage.

The first thing which astonished was the brogue: a study of the programme disclosed not a single Mc or O' among the names, but to an English ear it all sounded completely authentic. Not only the accent was good, but the rhythmic rise and fall of the speech, which in O'Casey's work is often so near verse, was never absent, and one felt that the players knew when they were speaking poetry: "Decoratin' eminent books with glowin' colour and audacious beauty were we . . . when you were still a hundred score o' years away from even hearin' of the alphabet"—so the Irish workman addresses his English employer.

The two Englishmen had perhaps the easiest time, being unhampered by unfamiliar speech, and they made admirable use of their opportunities. The first workman has many revealing lines such as "The lassie' o' the' house's gone careerin' all over the country on horseback with only her skin as a coverin'!" to which the electrician, stuck among the rafters, replies: "Oh, isn't it like me to be up here outa sight o' th' world, an' great things happenin'!" The impeccable production was a credit to the amateur theatre.

GUY BOAS

Two Classics

The University of Bristol Dramatic Society is more to be congratulated on its temerity in producing *The Maid's Tragedy*, by Beaumont and Fletcher, a difficult play and a great one, than on the actual performance achieved. With its subtle poetic overtones the play could not fail to interest any Shakespearean, and some of us have been waiting twenty or thirty years to see it performed. Its period can best be described as "soon after *Hamlet*" and like *Hamlet*, it is full of death, though the great scene of the killing of the King was for some unknown reason omitted. We are grateful to Mr. Noel Thomas for producing this most neglected play and must now wait another twenty or thirty years, I suppose, for the next performance.

J.L.

The Wayfarers of Southampton have a fine reputation, both for choosing good plays and for producing them carefully. Their *Hamlet* was such a production; simplified to achieve continuity, it was thoughtful both in playing and staging. Watching it, one was conscious of the huge demands which the play makes, and at the same time grateful that the producer had fulfilled to such an extent the essential ones, by getting honest thought and understanding from her company. The *Hamlet* himself was good enough to justify the brave attempt which was appreciated by a young audience giving the closest attention.

E. M. B.

Peterborough Celebrates

This year Peterborough celebrates the Thirteenth Centenary of its Cathedral. A pageant play, *Upon This Rock*, has been specially written by James Kirkup, with music by Christian Simpson, and is to be given from May 3rd to 12th.

The Mask Theatre, Peterborough, are a relatively new group who, despite heavy financial losses, have persevered in their aim of producing worthwhile plays with a courage and enthusiasm which compel admiration. They are being rewarded by growing public support. Recently they gave, on their 14-ft. deep stage, an excellent, well-spoken and colourful production of *Ring Round the Moon*.

Australian Theatre

Our professional managements have apparently been encouraged by the warm welcome given to actors imported under British Council auspices. "The Firm" (J. C. Williamson) will bring out the Old Vic Company for an Australian tour towards the end of the year, and the Melbourne entrepreneur, Mr. Garnet Carroll, announces that Sir Ralph Richardson and his wife, Meriel Forbes, will open at Perth in April. Dame Sybil Thorndike and Sir Lewis Casson, who included in their triumphal tour visits to Queensland coastal towns and Tasmania, are to join Sir Ralph's players.

In July the Firm will present an Italian Opera Company, with imported principals and local chorus. In the meantime our National Opera Company plans a Sydney season to begin in February; the Elizabethan Theatre Trust has enlisted State and municipal aid in securing for them somewhere to play pending the erection of the Opera House which is at present a castle in the air.

The Trust has proclaimed its intention to promote opera, drama and ballet on an all-Australian scale. In opera it has aimed at bringing together the two so-called "national" groups of Melbourne and Sydney. Ballet is not just now in need of its good offices, since the Borovansky Company based on Melbourne and sponsored by a group of Melbourne citizens, is proving itself a moneyspinner.

As for drama, the one positive step taken by the Trust to date has been to appoint Mr. Hugh Hunt as their administrator; no doubt any plans to "promote a right relationship between drama and the life of the community" will be held over pending his arrival. He will find on his survey of the Australian scene one element lacking—the smaller professional repertory theatres of English provincial towns, so essential to the "ladder" principle on which he built up the Bristol Old Vic. But he will also find that repertories in Australia, though amateur, have been for a generation practically the only medium through which the theatre has been kept alive, and if he sees his way to setting up a National Theatre company to tour the capital cities, they may serve as a recruiting ground.

For months now the Australian entertainment industry has been undergoing a Trans-Pacific invasion—sob-songsters, strip-teasers, merchants of hot rhythm, virtuosos of trumpet, drum and saxophone, all lured by the prospect of gold to be picked up under the Southern Cross. These barbaric yawps have been deliriously acclaimed by vast audiences and have no doubt given our teenagers a distorted view of the American way of life, which the Government of the United States seems concerned to correct. At least, this may be the explanation of a columnist's paragraph in to-day's press, as follows:—

What a July in Sydney! The Italian Opera at the Empire and (my tip) George Gershwin's opera *Porgy and Bess* at the Tivoli. Reports are it'll cost the American Government 120,000 dollars to freight the company here. *Porgy and Bess* is a culture mission by the U.S. Government, like Britain's Stratford-on-Avon.

The withdrawal of the British Council has created a vacuum, and it is the nature of a vacuum to attract fill-ups. If the Gershwin experiment succeeds, one wonders whether the American Government might consider sending the great lady of their theatre, Judith Anderson, to open the new Repertory Theatre at Adelaide in 1956. She is an Australian born and bred, and though her career has been in the States her stage debut was made with Adelaide Repertory Company.

Little Theatres continue to attack their housing problems with gallantry. Brett Randall of Melbourne is making good progress in raising funds for his admirably planned new building on an extension of the old site in South Yarra, Frankston School of Arts is to be remodelled in time for next year's V.D.L. Festival, and at Deniliquin, in N.S.W. just over the Victorian border, the Dramatic Club had a formal opening of their recently-acquired theatre just before Christmas at which B.D.L. (Aust.) was represented by Mr. Colin Badger, now our President.

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ANYONE who sees a great deal of the Amateur Theatre must inevitably experience periods of profound depression because promising, interesting or definitely good productions are so heavily outnumbered by those which are poor, pointless, aimless, negative or just plain bad. But we do from time to time see something of exceptional quality, which revives our hopes like a shaft of sunlight breaking through a leaden sky. There is nothing more satisfying than the justification of belief, and no amount of ill-treatment at the hands of the wrong kind of amateur can shake my belief in the right kind. I have often seen good acting; less often, intelligent and sensitive production. Good presentation, however, is rare.

Why is it that all that we mean by presentation is so dimly apprehended in the amateur theatre? I have long been convinced that this is due far more to the physical conditions in which amateurs work than seems to be generally realised. It is significant that good presentation nearly always comes from those groups which have their own little theatres. However simple, however home-made some of these may be, they are *theatres* and not halls. We do, of course, occasionally see good settings in bad halls but even they only show us how good they could be in happier conditions.

The flat-floored auditorium, with its high, broad, shallow, shelf-like stage presents insurmountable obstacles both to designer and producer. Pictorial composition is impossible in these circumstances, as is good grouping, for if the stage picture is to be satisfying, our eyes must be raised at least as high above its base as they are above the ground or floor in real life. In ordinary horse-shoe theatres it is from the first circle that we get the best picture.

But this is not all. Presentation has a two-fold purpose, and while composition is of immense importance it is even more vital that the setting, whether realistic or symbolic, should reflect the mood of the play. We can watch actors without any setting at all, if they really are actors, and indeed Mr. Thornton Wilder has beautifully proved that setting is not only redundant, but positively impossible if it has had no part in the author's conception. What we cannot look at with any kind of enjoyment is the kind of setting which is simply a concession to an accepted convention: something knocked up because the audience expects it. (The determination to give audiences what they expect is quite bewildering. Expectation and enjoyment are by no means always the same thing. We may expect a fog or an outbreak of measles, but we don't

enjoy them the more on that account.) Nothing interferes with good acting more than the kind of setting we most frequently see: the utterly unrealistic attempt at realism, embarrassing in its inefficiency, and failing to strike a single note in tune with the play. We can listen happily to an unaccompanied song, but we can't listen at all if the singer is accompanied in a different key; though this, supposing it were possible, would hardly be putting a greater strain on our ears than is frequently put on our eyes by wholly unsympathetic "scenery".

It has happened quite often that when, after seeing a play ruined by the worst kind of box-set, I have asked, "Why didn't you present it in plain curtains?" I have received the reply, "Our audiences wouldn't stand for it. People like to see painted flats." But nobody should "see painted flats"; by means of flats, properly made, painted and assembled, they should see *architecture*. The sole business of the flat is deception. If it fails to deceive, if it looks like a flat, it is not doing its work, and a curtain, which does not pretend to be anything other than it is, will be far better because it will at least not be distracting or embarrassing.

I have nothing whatever against painted flats or representational settings. If the author and producer both visualise the play in "realistic" terms (I am one of those who still think the author's intention important), then it should be presented in those terms. But if conditions will not allow of true representation, the producer must concentrate on suggestion alone. Embellishments may help or hinder according to their quality, their fitness and the way they are used: the only essential is to create, whether in a curtain setting or on an open stage, an atmosphere in tune with the play.

CHARLES THOMAS

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MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the British Drama League held at 9 Fitzroy Square, London, W.1, on Wednesday, December 8th, 1954, at 6 p.m. The Viscount Esher, M.B.E. (President) in the Chair.

1. *Minutes* of the last meeting, which had been circulated in the Spring 1954 number of *DRAMA*, were taken as read and signed.

2. *The Annual Report* was presented by Mr. E. Martin Browne (Director) who, in moving its adoption, paid tribute to the work of the staff and of the voluntary organisers and committees throughout the country. Mr. Robin Whitworth (Deputy Chairman), seconding, asked the meeting to send a special message of thanks to the retiring Chairman, Mr. John Maude, Q.C., and of good wishes on his appointment as a Judge. This was agreed by acclamation and the Report adopted.

3. *Accounts*. The Hon. Treasurer, Mr. Charles E. Trott, read the Auditor's report and presented the Balance Sheet. He hoped by careful management to balance the accounts next year while introducing reforms such as the staff pension scheme which the last Annual Meeting had called for. He showed that this year's picture was somewhat better than had been anticipated. Mr. J. Arthur Jones seconding, the Accounts were adopted.

4. *Council for 1955-56*. The Secretary reported the election of National and Regional Members (see *DRAMA*, inside front cover).

5. *Auditors*. The Hon. Treasurer moved, Mr. J. Arthur Jones seconded, and it was resolved "that Messrs. D. M. Vaughan and Co. Ltd., be re-elected Auditors for the year 1955".

6. *National Theatre*. Mr. Robin Whitworth, at the behest of the Executive, urged that the time was ripe for the erection of the National Theatre. The League had been unwaveringly devoted to this cause since 1919. He proposed:

That in view of the improving economic position of the country, the British Drama League urgently requests H.M. Government to implement the National Theatre Act of 1948 forthwith.

Professor T. H. Searls, seconding, said that building conditions were also propitious. Mr. Bushill-Matthews (Birmingham) and Mr. Donald McLauchlan (Manchester), said that they were among the many people living in the provinces who would be delighted to support the building of the National Theatre, and urged the Executive to press for it immediately. The resolution was carried unanimously.

The meeting terminated with a vote of thanks to the President.

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